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ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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Note to subscribers:

This is the final edition of EPS. From 1 September EPS will be superseded by **Ecumenical News International**. EPS subscribers will receive the ENI bulletin automatically until December 1994. The changes are explained in detail in the letter from the editors.

EPS is an ecumenical news service, sponsored by the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Conference of European Churches, in partnership with the World Student Christian Federation, the World Alliance of YMCAs and the World YWCA. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the sponsoring organizations.

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Ecumenical Press Service: Year 61 / Issue 20

S H O P T A L K

Ecumenical News International, a new ecumenical news service will be launched on 1 September 1994. ENI will provide a regular news service, by fax and electronic mail, for secular and church related media and will publish a printed bulletin every two weeks. **ENI** will supersede **EPS**, whose subscribers will receive the **ENI** bulletin from September onwards. Subscription rates for 1995 will be published in the autumn.

ENI will provide an up-to-date, global, ecumenical news service; offer news coverage of the daily life and witness of churches worldwide, from many different perspectives; give religious perspectives to worldwide news developments, including political and international issues, as they occur.

The co-editors of **ENI** are Stephen Brown and Edmund Doogue.

ENI is supported by the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Conference of European Churches, but is distinct from the partners who sponsor it.

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As part of the plans for **Ecumenical News International**, **ENI** is seeking experienced journalists as contributors in different parts of the world. Potential contributors are invited to send to the ENI editors in Geneva their curriculum vitae and copies of three of their articles published this year.

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ENI will be available by electronic mail and ENI stories can be sent to any INTERNET e-mail address as they are published. Until 31 December 1994, existing EPS subscribers may also receive ENI articles by electronic mail without further charge. Please contact ENI if you wish to receive **ENI** by e-mail. **ENI** will also be available on **ECUNET**, an electronic network. ECUNET subscribers will be able to access ENI stories as they are published. For further information on ECUNET contact David Pozzi-Johnson at the World Council of Churches.

ENI can be reached by e-mail.

Please note that the new ENI INTERNET address is:

31domain.wcc1.eni@WCCXSMTP.WCC-COE.ORG

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From the EPS Editors

Geneva, 31 August 1994

This issue of the Ecumenical Press Service is the last issue of EPS in its present form. On 1 September 1994, EPS will be superseded by **Ecumenical News International** - a global, ecumenical news service supported by the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the Conference of European Churches.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the "information series" of the **International Christian Press Information Service** (ICPIS), which became, in 1947, the **Ecumenical Press Service**. ICPIS was published under the auspices of the Life and Work movement, one of the streams that flowed into the World Council of Churches.

However, even before ICPIS began its work, an International Christian Press Commission took upon itself the task of promoting Life and Work. It circulated "ecumenical letters" among church leaders as well as editors and correspondents.

The first editor of ICPIS was Alexandre de Weymarn, once described as "probably the single most important person in EPS's history". Born in Lithuania, he was a skilled reader of Russian, German, French and English. "He was what a central European news editor is supposed to look like - short, bird-like in his movements, neat and fastidious, with small eyes cannily assessing everything," wrote John Garrett, who worked with Alexandre de Weymarn and became his successor.

For many years, EPS copy was written on Monday and circulated in advance for a meeting of representatives of sponsor organizations held on Tuesday, chaired by W. A. Visser 't Hooft, the WCC's first general secretary. Later, the institutional ties weakened.

"Years ago it might have been possible to write it [EPS] off as an exercise in public relations. Today all news agencies look compromised," wrote Larry Jorgenson, a researcher who ten years ago reviewed 50 years of EPS' history.

This issue of EPS includes excerpts from the 60-year history of ICPIS and EPS. It is not a comprehensive review of 60 years of ecumenical history but a sample of how EPS reported issues and events. Excerpts reprinted here follow the spelling and punctuation of the original EPS reports.

Ecumenical News International will offer news coverage of the daily life and witness of churches worldwide, from many different perspectives; and give religious perspectives to worldwide news developments, including political and international issues, as they occur.

ENI owes much to the vision and work of Tom Dorris, EPS editor 1981-91, who was killed in a car accident on 9 July. It is a cause for sadness that he did not live to see the appearance of **ENI**.

ENI will provide a regular news service, by fax and electronic mail, for secular and church related media and will publish a printed bulletin every two weeks.

All EPS subscribers will receive the **ENI Bulletin** until the end of 1994. Subscription prices for **ENI** in 1995 will be published later this autumn.

Stephen Brown Edmund Doogue

Co-Editors

EPS 94.FIN.02

Church reunion discussed in Poland

WARSAW, March 1934--The Orthodox dioceses of Warsaw and Holm held their first diocesan conference from 28 to 30 December in Warsaw. They passed a resolution on the need for Christian unity in the face of anti-Christian forces, which refers to the participation of Orthodox Archbishop Dionysius in the recent joint conference of Orthodox, Anglican and Protestant Churches and to the continuing interest of the Polish Orthodox in reunion.

The resolution goes on to mention two main obstacles to the work of Polish Orthodox towards reunification. Their church has no legal status which has put it "in an extremely difficult material situation". And parts of the country inhabited by the Orthodox "have been declared by the Roman Catholic Church her missionary field".

EPS 94.FIN.03

Indian women's vote for peace

CALCUTTA, March 1934--Two hundred Indian women from Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsi and Christian communities met in Calcutta between Christmas and New Year to discuss social, educational and political advance. Among their many resolutions was a condemnation of war as a crime against humanity.

EPS 94.FIN.04

Orthodox and Protestant bishops call for statement of peace aims

GENEVA, January 1940--On the occasion of the recent meeting of officers of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches the undersigned two Bishops of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Protestant Church respectively, made the following statement:

"Never has it been so urgent as in the disintegrated world of today to have all Churches united in work for peace and in witness to the bearing of the principles of the Gospel on public life. The Oecumenical Movement of the last twenty-five years has proved how far-reaching are the convictions shared by all Christians and has laid this fact down in important declarations especially at the World Conference of Churches in 1937. More than ever peace has reigned among the different Churches. This peace has not been based on the abandonment by any Churches of their particular character. It has come because, in making closer contact with one another, the Churches have realised how overwhelming is the fact that they have the one Saviour and Lord and also the fact that His Love and Law have a bearing on every aspect of human life.

In this work of understanding the Roman Catholic Church has until now not directly participated. In the Encyclical "Summi Pontificatus", and more especially in his speech on Christmas Eve 1939, His Holiness the Pope expressed in a most impressive and convincing way convictions similar in principle to those enunciated in the above-mentioned declarations.

We call attention to the fact that after these statements there is, with regard to the basic principles for peaceful co-operation among the nations, now one common Christian front in the world of to-day.

The observation of this fact lays a redoubled responsibility on the Christian Churches who unitedly stand for effective liberty of conscience and freedom of worship to urge their statesmen to consider and to make known as soon as possible their aims concerning peace and international order based on the principles of equal justice to all nations and brotherly co-operation in the spirit of Christ. Without the vision supplied by such a constructive statement of peace-aims at this very time, the destructive powers will increasingly tend to drag mankind down to a brutal level of thought, feeling and action."

Irenaeus
Bishop of Novi Sad

Eivind Berggrav
Bishop of Oslo

EPS 94.FIN.05

Indian nationalism and Indian Christians

GENEVA, February 1940--Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, outstanding leader of the Indian National Congress, has recently sent a message to a meeting of Indian Christians which contains the following passages:

"The future Indian State, after we have gained independence, must necessarily be a secular State, that is, the State cannot represent any one religion. While it is a secular State, it must give the fullest freedom in matters of conscience and religious observances, subject only to public order and morality. No other solution is possible. Every other solution will lead to conflict and would be out of keeping with modern conditions and views of State organization.

"It is right that a Constitution should make it perfectly clear that a religious group or minority will have its religious rights protected. You are no doubt aware of the Karachi resolution of the Congress and many subsequent resolutions in which it has been clearly stated that this protection of religious as well as cultural rights should be made a fundamental law of the Constitution. I take it that we are all agreed about that. Nevertheless one has to remember that the satisfactory working of any Law or Constitution requires a great deal of goodwill and a certain psychological background. This goodwill and background can only come if the relations between Indian Christians and others in India are on a friendly and co-operative basis, or to put it differently, if Indian Christians are a vital part of Indian Nationalism. If this is not so, friction will continue.

"Indian Christians have, therefore, acted very wisely in opposing the political divisions of the Indian people on the basis of religious beliefs and in declaring against Communal Electorates. Such divisions can only injure them without giving them effective protection. In spite of this, however, the Government of India Act of 1935 put them into a separable compartment. This was unfortunate and yet it was the inevitable development of British policy in India which has deliberately sought to encourage destructive tendencies in India and thus weaken Indian nationalism and unity. The only way to counter this injurious move of the British Government is to hold tight to the principles which have been repeatedly affirmed at various Conferences of Indian Christians which have condemned the communal electorates and such like "fissiparous" devices. Positively the policy to be pursued should be, if I may say so, one of complete lining up with Indian nationalism in the cause of Indian freedom..."

EPS 94.FIN.06

Relations between the Anglican Church and the Orthodox Churches

GENEVA, June 1940--The periodical Duhova Straja, edited by Archimandrite Stephan at Novi Sad, published in its Spring 1940 number an account of the visit of representatives of the Anglican Church to Belgrade. Here are its principal passages:

The Anglican Church has shown particular activity in its relations with the Eastern Orthodox Church during 1940. At the beginning of May, an Anglican delegation including the Bishops of Gloucester and Gibraltar visited the Orthodox Churches in the Balkans. The aim of these visits was to make a general survey of the question of union between the Anglican Church and the Orthodox Church so as to present a report on that subject at the Lambeth Conference planned for 1942. It was observed that the Orthodox Churches have no common point of view in this respect. Thus the Rumanian Orthodox Church has taken up a point of view favourable to union without putting any obstacle in the way; the Greek Church has given a conditionally favourable reply; the Serbian and Bulgarian Churches have given no reply.

After visiting Rumania, the Anglican delegation came to Belgrade, where it held an unofficial conference on May 27 with representatives of the Patriarchate of Serbia, under the presidency of the Bishop of Batch and Bishop Irenaeus. The delegates were first of all received by the Patriarch Gabriel.

The chief subject examined was that of ordination. The following resolution was adopted:

"While fully recognising that no final decision on the question of ordination can be taken without the collaboration of the Russian Church and the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Conference requests the Church of the Patriarchate of Serbia to examine the question, acting in conformity with what the other branches of the Orthodox Church have done in this connection, and to express its opinion in response to the desire of the Conference."

The representatives of the Anglican Church also met representatives of the Bulgarian Church, with whom they also discussed the question of union. At Sofia, in the Cathedral of the Resurrection, an Anglican Episcopal Liturgy preceded the Orthodox Liturgy.

EPS 94.FIN.07

USSR: Women in the Ministry

GENEVA, July 1940--The latest number of the monthly periodical The Antireligious publishes an article on women in the ministry. Speaking for example of Carelia, it mentions many places of prayer where services are carried on by women. These parsons of a new kind are not ordained like priests, as that would be a violation of Church regulations. The people call them "deaconesses", "readers", or "mothers". The women themselves emphasise that they are not acting in any way which could infringe the regulations of the Church. They do not go into the sanctuary, (only the priests or male church members may do so) and the iconostasis remains closed in the church where they conduct the service.

"These women ministers stand among the church members during the service. They do not wear a religious costume, but their garments are as close as possible to those of nuns. On festival days, they sing mass and vespers, except for the passages reserved for the priest. They recite the prayers and sing the hymns, and all the members make their responses...

"These women give much attention to the services for the dead. The churches near cemeteries always remain open, and so many people come there. Those who come to visit the graves of their relatives go into the churches, and so the women ministers, who live nearby and spend much time in the church, have an opportunity to do pastoral work among them.

"The women ministers have a very good diction; they speak clearly, and not at all like the old unintelligible buzzing of the sacristan. Thus the services conducted by these women often make a greater impression than those conducted by priests. The fact that the congregation itself takes part in the singing strengthens this impression still more."

These facts are the sign of an intensification of religious life in new forms; but for the author of the article, the existence of these women ministers is simply a trick of the Church, which thinks that in this way it can make the services more "democratic" and so get larger sums of money from the pockets of the believers. The priests remain in the background and believe that the women ministers will attract less attention from the Soviet authorities, according to this author.

"In secret, the women ministers consult the priests to know exactly what they must do and how to do it... The effort is made to attract women into the parish councils, where they sometimes form the majority."

The article concludes by insisting on the necessity to regard these women ministers in the same way as other leaders of Christian worship and to take the same repressive measures against them. "The Godless women, especially those who have important posts in the Soviet administration, must be mobilised for the struggle against believing women."

EPS 94.FIN.08

The death of the Archbishop of Canterbury

GENEVA, November 1944--Dr William Temple has just died after a short illness. The Anglican Church and the World Council of Churches have suffered a very great and very sad loss. The loss is all the greater because the possibilities of common action between the Churches in England and in other countries seemed to depend for a great part during these coming years on the authority of this wise and experienced man.

The Archbishop of Canterbury had rightly gained the confidence of the Churches and of those who were in touch with him. This was due to his fruitful work in the field of theology, to his great understanding of the position of other religious communities, and also to his appreciation of the problems of the future, and to the fact that his mind was always open to the boldest of social and ecclesiastical reforms.

From early years Dr Temple has been associated with progressive movements in the Church and state. He was President of the Workers' Educational Association from 1908 to 1924, and was always a vigorous exponent of social justice. The Malvern Conference of January 1941 was held largely through his inspiration. It was a bold effort on the part of the Church of England to express the Church's mission in social affairs. After the conference Dr Temple and the Archbishop of York addressed many great meetings in London and the provinces on the subject. His Penguin booklet on Christianity and Social Order had a great circulation. The Archbishop frequently referred to practical questions such as control of industry, banking and other economic questions, though he explained that these matters were given prominence in the press often to the detriment of the religious and spiritual message he had to give.

It is he who contributed so greatly to the formation of the British Council of Churches which was destined to co-ordinate the work of all British Churches outside the Roman confession and which also bridged the gulf between these British Churches and the Churches of America. He devoted himself to the work of missions, promoted close relations between the Churches of the West and the Orthodox Churches, supported the union of the Churches in South India; he directed the work of the movement Faith and Order and, since 1938, was president of the provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches.

EPS 94.FIN.09

Germany: first Jewish service

GENEVA, January 1945--The Jewish Weekly (Zurich) gives in its number of January 19, 1945 the following report from Boyd Lewis, United Press correspondent:

"A Jewish chaplain of the American army has for the first time held a Jewish service in Germany. The battered ruins of the Gestapo headquarters in Brand near Aix-la-Chapelle served as a synagogue, and the altar was a box; the Roll of the Law used came from a synagogue burnt down by the National Socialists in the pogrom of November 1938. It had been hidden by a German Jewish family and taken to London. National Socialist mottoes still hung on the walls. Soldiers of the Jewish faith attended the service".

EPS 94.FIN.10

Germany: Death of Pastor Dietrich Bonhöffer

GENEVA, June 1945--We learn that Pastor Dietrich Bonhöffer, who had been in captivity for two years, was murdered in the middle of April, shortly before the liberation by American troops, by an S.S. commando-unit in the concentration camp of Flossenburg near Neustadt in Bavaria.

In him the Confessional Church in Germany and the Ecumenical Movement lose a bold witness to Christ and a leading collaborator. Pastor Bonhöffer was born in 1906; he went to the United States to study; he was later pastor in a German Lutheran Church in London, and later he was appointed head of a Confessional Church Training College in Pomerania. As a member of the Youth Commission of the World Council of Churches and of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, Dr Bonhöffer played a considerable part in the conflict with the totalitarian State. He was on friendly terms with leading Anglo-Saxon Christians, especially with the Bishop of Chichester, with whom he collaborated in helping the pastors and Christian laymen of the Confessional Church who were forced to emigrate. During the war Pastor Bonhöffer contributed, in sympathy with the German opposition, to strengthening the resistance among the Christian congregations to the National Socialist régime, and at the same time to serving the spiritual renewal of the Church. During the war also, he visited Switzerland and Sweden, and was thus able to maintain ecumenical contacts.

EPS 94.FIN.11

USA: The Federal Council of Churches and the Atomic Bomb

GENEVA--The following statement asking for respite in the use of the atomic bomb on Japan was issued on August 9, 1945 by Bishop Oxnam, President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and Mr John Foster Dulles, Chairman of the Commission to Study the Bases for a Just and Durable Peace. It appeared on the first page of the New York Herald Tribune on August 10. Two hours later it was overshadowed by the radio announcement of the Japanese offer of surrender.

The statement reads as follows:

"Americans can be proud that under their auspices a scientific miracle has been performed. But we must be concerned about what happens next. We have shown that men can find in matter incalculable new energy which can work for a fuller, better life for all, but which also might make this planet uninhabitable. The only defence against the latter fate is the self-restraint and sense of responsibility of those who control the new knowledge. One thing now made crystal clear is that the United Nations Organisation must be rapidly developed. The world has overnight become desperately dependent on international controls and on the mutual trust upon which they rest.

We cannot, however, in that way solve the problem of what immediate use we should make of the atomic bomb now in our hands. Inevitably the example we set in that respect will profoundly affect the future.

One choice open to us is immediately to wreak upon our enemy mass destruction such as men have never before imagined. That will inevitably obliterate men and women, young and aged, innocent and guilty alike because they are part of a nation which has attacked us and whose conduct has stirred our deep wrath. If we, a professedly Christian nation, feel morally free to use atomic energy in that way, men elsewhere will accept that verdict. Atomic weapons will be looked upon as a normal part of the arsenal of war, and the stage will be set for the sudden and final destruction of mankind.

Another choice is to consider that the new knowledge we possess is, from the beginning, impressed with a trust for the benefit of humanity. President Truman has said: 'Atomic power can become a powerful and forceful influence toward the maintenance of world peace'. The time to prove that is now. We can, in the Japanese war itself, seek to show quickly and dramatically how our new power can be used to stop war - not merely prosecute it. That would require at least a temporary suspension or alteration of our programme of air attack on the Japanese homeland to give the Japanese people an adequate opportunity to react to the new situation through leaders who will accept the surrender terms we and our allies have offered.

World Council officers issue appeal for Hungary

GENEVA, 9 November 1956--Three leaders of the World Council of Churches, in New York, London and Geneva, have said that "Christians throughout the world are profoundly shocked and sorrow-stricken at the tragic reversal suffered by the Hungarian people who had clearly asserted their desire for freedom and independence in national and church life".

The three officers of the Council remind its 165 member churches of their previously expressed conviction "that fear and suspicion cannot be replaced by respect and trust unless powerful nations remove the yoke which now prevents other nations and peoples from freely determining their own government and form of society". The member churches are urged to continue to seek this objective and to "stand together with all who in the struggle for freedom suffer pain and trial".

The three signatories are officers of the world body's Central Committee: Dr Franklin Clark Fry (New York), chairman; Dr Ernest Payne (London), vice-chairman; and WCC general secretary, Dr W. A. Visser 't Hooft, Geneva.

The statement was sent immediately to the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, together with the recently issued appeal made by the same three men drawing attention to principles for a settlement of the Suez crisis issued on November 2. ...

In an urgent message received in Geneva on November 3 the then newly established National Christian Youth Federation in Hungary appealed to "the Christians of the Soviet Union, the United States, England and France, to awaken the conscience of the public and of the governments" to accept the neutrality of Hungary.

The Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and all Christian youth movements were participating in the Christian Youth Federation. The World Council of Churches sent the message simultaneously to the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the British Council of Churches, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA and the French Protestant Federation.

"May God our Heavenly Father, who is the God of history, bless the efforts of our nation to build up an independent free and neutral Hungary", the message said. ...

Far-reaching changes were under way in the Protestant churches in Hungary, according to information received at World Council of Churches headquarters in Geneva, on November 1st. It was proposed that new elections be held in both Lutheran and Reformed churches for all church posts occupied by officials who had received their appointments since 1948. All such officials, including bishops, had resigned, or were expected to resign, until new elections could be held.

It was also then anticipated that church institutions, which had been banned, would be reopened. This included church schools, hospitals, and other institutions of social and educational character, Dean Laszlo Pap, of the Reformed Theological Seminary, Budapest, reported. Youth work organisations such as YMCA and the Student Christian Movement were started again.

Bishop Lajos Ordass, the Lutheran bishop condemned to prison in 1948 and rehabilitated last month, had again occupied his former bishopric and was fully functioning as a bishop. He preached the Reformation Day sermon, on October 31, in Deak Square Lutheran church, Budapest. Bishop Laszlo Dezsery, who had been occupying the bishopric of Ordass and acted as preacher at Deak Square church, had resigned. Bishop Janos Peter of the Reformed Church had also resigned, along with Bishop Albert Bereczky, who has been seriously ill.

Four districts of the Reformed Church had been reconstituted. The well-known Bishop Ladislas Ravasz had again become Bishop of the Danubian District. Bishop Ravasz was at the inaugural Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam, as president of the Hungarian Reformed Church's General Synod...

The churches face events in the Middle East

GENEVA, 9 November 1956--In a statement issued on November 2 officers of the World Council of Churches reminded the Council's 165 member churches in 47 countries of statements made by the churches in 1954 calling on the nations to "refrain from the use of force against the territorial integrity of any state" and to use only such measures to deter or combat aggression as conform to the requirements of the UN Charter. They referred to a previous agreement of the churches that "no nation in an international dispute has the right to be judge in its own cause."

The statement is over the names of the chairman of the Central Committee, Dr Franklin Clark Fry (USA); Dr Ernest Payne (United Kingdom), vice-chairman of the Central Committee; and Dr W. A. Visser 't Hooft, of the Netherlands, the Council's general secretary.

The agreements quoted by the statement in reference to the present situation in the Suez area were unanimously expressed by representatives of the World Council's member bodies during the Council's last full Assembly at Evanston in the USA in August, 1954. ...

Speaking in the House of Lords on November 1st the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, said that the only question which Britain, as a responsible nation, had to ask, was "are we doing the right thing by the highest and wisest standards that we, as a nation, know?" He declared that Britain could not ignore the fact that the President of the United States had told it that it had made "a grave error" and that world opinion was almost entirely convinced that this was so. There was a strong case for saying that Britain's action was a contravention of the spirit and the letter of the United Nations' Charter. ...

British Christian Pacifist group speaks

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, "representing some 17,000 Christian people of all branches of the Church in Britain", issued a statement condemning the British Government's action in Egypt as "wrong in itself" and as "aggravating the very situation which it professes to alleviate", undermining the United Nations, hampering the achievement of a world community, and weakening Britain's moral standing and influence in the world. ...

Bishop Dibelius appeals to British and French churches

"German Protestants are deeply distressed by the events in the Near and Middle East. They look to the British Churches in the assurance that our united prayers for world peace will be answered." So runs the text of the two identical telegrams sent on November 2 by Bishop Otto Dibelius (chairman of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, EKD, and a president of the World Council of Churches) to Dr John Baillie (Edinburgh, one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches) and to Dr Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury. "The whole country is alarmed and disturbed about the political events. The Christian churches are looking for a solution", replied Dr Fisher.

Bishop Dibelius sent a similar telegram to Pastor Marc Boegner, president of the French Protestant Federation, who replied: "Your friendly message has deeply impressed us, and we greatly appreciate it. On Tuesday the French Protestant Federation is holding an extraordinary meeting."

French Protestant Federation deplores action

At a special meeting, the Council of the French Protestant Federation issued a statement reading:
"The Council of the Protestant Federation of France, meeting in extraordinary session on November 6th, 1956

Considers it most distressing and regrettable that the governments of France and Great Britain, faced with countless violations of the United Nations' Charter, should have judged unilateral intervention as legitimate;

Fears the psychological consequences of this decision for which others claim, or might claim, to seek justification;

Deplores the United Nations' want of authority and effectiveness and expresses the hope that the present crisis may bring its member nations to remedy the weakness and evasions which have paralysed its functioning.

The Council affirms its conviction that order and justice are possible only where there is respect for an internationally acknowledged standard of law. It asks that hostilities cease within the shortest possible time, and that the United Nations, with an international force at last at its disposal, should assume responsibility for re-establishing and maintaining peace in the Near East."

American Churches pray for peace, justice, freedom

The Protestant and Orthodox churches in the United States were called to make Sunday November 4 a day of special prayer for "peace with justice and freedom"...

World Council's General Secretary sends messages to Egyptian member churches

On the outbreak of fighting in Egypt the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, Dr W.A. Visser 't Hooft, sent identical messages by telegram on November 1st to the Council's member churches in Egypt, the Coptic Church and the Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria.

The message reads: "World Council of Churches expresses deep sympathy with your Church in grave situation owing hostilities against Egypt. Please let us know if you have needs which we can help meeting."

A reply received from the Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo in the name of Archbishop Aghabios sincerely thanks Dr Visser 't Hooft and continues: "Kindly pray with us for peace and safety of our country."

EPS 94.FIN.14

Turkey: attempt to have Ecumenical Patriarch expelled

21 December 1956--A motion has recently been introduced into the Turkish Parliament seeking the expulsion of the Ecumenical Patriarch from Turkey on the ground that he is more a political than a spiritual leader. The Pahnar, seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, is near Istanbul.

Observers report a wave of Turkish nationalism and a tense situation for Greek and other minorities arising out of strong Turkish feeling over the Cyprus question. They attribute some of the opposition to the Patriarch to the fact that he was for many years Archbishop of the Greek Orthodox Church in North and South America.

EPS 94.FIN.15

RC theologian says Vatican Council will have "ecumenical aims"

VIENNA, 3 November 1961--A Roman Catholic theologian has told an audience here that the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council called by Pope John XXIII will not be confined to Catholic affairs, "although attempts have been made to restrict it in that way".

The enthusiasm which greeted announcement of plans for the Council, he said, was followed by a certain "soberness", which was due particularly to "the obvious intention of certain Vatican circles to push the question of reunion into the background, although this is the question which Pope John had wished to be the Council's main concern. "Now", he said, "it is certain the Council will be a Council of the Roman Catholic Church with ecumenical aims."

The comments were made by Dr Hans Küng, professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Tübingen, Germany, in a speech entitled "Will the Vatican Council bring unity between Catholics, Protestants and Orthodox".

"The question of reunion has suddenly become a great concern of the whole Church, and of the world", he said. "There has been a complete change in the attitude of the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church who are now striving for unity, not in the form of a return of the 'separated brethren' to the fold of Rome, but in the form of encounter."

EPS 94.FIN.16

WCC breaks with tradition: elects two laymen to presidium

NEW DELHI, 4 December 1961--Mid-way through its Third Assembly, now meeting here, the World Council of Churches made a break with tradition by electing two laymen to its presidium.

They are Sir Francis Ibiam, governor of the Eastern Province of Nigeria, physician, and distinguished Presbyterian, and Mr Charles C. Parlin (USA), an outstanding Methodist and a senior member of a law firm in New York City.

The first and only other lay president of the WCC until now was Miss Sarah Chakko, who was asked to fill a vacancy that had occurred in the presidium between the first and second Assemblies. Miss Chakko, principal of the Women's Christian College at Lucknow, had served for only a few months when she died from a heart attack.

EPS 94.FIN.17

WCC Assembly sends message on race to South Africa

NEW DELHI, 8 December 1961--Solidarity with all those who serve and suffer to eliminate race or colour discrimination or segregation, especially in South Africa, has been expressed by the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches.

"Christians everywhere are involved in the struggle", the Assembly said in a message addressed to Christians in South Africa. "May all who thus serve, and all who suffer, be strengthened.

"May dignity and unity among men be established through the righteousness of God, in your land as well as in those from which we come.

"We pray that as the peoples of Africa move into their new day, the Church of Christ will play an ever-increasing creative role in promoting understanding, justice, faith, hope and love."

The Assembly endorsed a declaration made a year earlier at a meeting held in Cottesloe, near Johannesburg, South Africa, by a WCC-convened consultation of the Council's eight member churches in that country.

The declaration said in part: "No one who believes in Jesus Christ may be excluded from any Church on the grounds of his colour or race."

Since the consultation, three South African Dutch Reformed churches which took part in it have withdrawn from the WCC. They are churches which generally agree with their government's apartheid policy.

In the message adopted here, South African Christians were assured that members of the Assembly "have been aware of the developments within the past 18 months in the relationships between Christians and churches in South Africa and the World Council of Churches".

"To all of you who preach Christ to the unbelieving and to all who manifest the Spirit of Christ to their neighbours, we offer our encouragement and fellowship, and assure you of our prayers", the Assembly said.

EPS 94.FIN.18

French clergy 'strike' over closing of mines

LENS, France, 18 January 1968--Roman Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and Jewish rabbis joined the general strike called by trade unions in this northern French coal mining town to protest government plans for pit closures. This action would throw 30,000 men of the region out of work over a period of seven years.

Priests celebrated mass as usual and were ready to perform emergency duties, but no burials or weddings were conducted...

EPS 94.FIN.19

Czech pastors commit themselves to "passive resistance"

GENEVA, 5 September 1968--The Pastor's Association of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren has termed the "Moscow agreement imposed by brute force" on Czechoslovakia "an attack on our January programme of 'Socialism with a human face'".

The statement was drawn up on August 28 in Prague by 40 pastors; it was then telephoned to a pastor in Switzerland with the request that he should make it widely known. The pastors commit themselves to "the concept of humanity, carried out in freedom and truth" and to "the path of passive resistance against falsehood and injustice".

"We all have chances of overcoming an opponent who is physically stronger by means of passive resistance, if we do not become cowardly and unwise", says the statement. To do so "we must not be governed by the idea of our own safety nor by conformist resignation". We must remember the words of Jesus Christ, 'Whoever would save his life will lose it'. Christ was always on the side of the oppressed, the betrayed, the deceived, and the defenceless."

The appeal says the Pastors' Association will not "refuse its spiritual consolation" to all whose hopes have been destroyed by the occupation of Czechoslovakia and by the Moscow agreement. "Let us organize actions to liberate every prisoner of whom we hear! Let us support all those who are in material need."

The real aim, however, must continue to be "the victory of truth in <u>all</u> nations. No nation which thinks only of its own freedom will avoid its own downfall. Not only in other countries of the world, but also in the five states whose armies are occupying our country for the eighth day, our friends are working for the victory of 'socialism with a human face'. If we remain loyal, it will help them also. And their struggle means a real hope for us that the sovereignty of our State will be fully restored".

EPS 94.FIN.20

Orthodox leader wants Catholics in World Council's ranks

VIENNA, 28 November 1968--In order for the ecumenical movement to be "more all-embracing", Metropolitan Meliton of Chalcedon has expressed the hope that the Roman Catholic Church will become a member of the World Council of Churches.

Metropolitan Meliton, dean of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and a vice-chairman of the WCC's Central Committee, offered this personal opinion in an address to the Pro Oriente Foundation here on November 26. (The foundation was established in 1964 by Franz Cardinal König in an effort to improve relations between the Roman Catholic and the Orthodox churches.)

Referring to the presence of Roman Catholic delegated observers at the recent Fourth (Uppsala) Assembly, the Orthodox leader said: "On the theological side the participation of the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox greatly helped the Assembly to orientate itself towards more Catholic standpoints - I am using the etymological sense of the term". Speeches by Orthodox Metropolitan Ignatios Hazim and Jesuit Father Roberto Tucci were "highlights of the Assembly and opened deep spiritual horizons", he said.

The central theological problem which Uppsala failed to solve, according to metropolitan Meliton, was how to view the Christian faith. Should the Christian Church and the WCC "move in a vertical direction aiming mainly at conversion, rebirth and the fulfilment of man in Christ? Or in a horizontal direction, aiming at curing the evils in the world, the creation of a moral order of things on this earth?

"The great Fathers of the Church in the East never distinguished between the vertical and the horizontal", Meliton said, "because their theology held in view the whole vision. It was a theology of the whole of creation, of cosmic dimensions, of the god-man who became 'flesh-bearing' so that man might become spirit-bearing'".

"Today we need to renew theology at the springs of Patristic thought", he said. "This does not mean turning back, but it does mean turning away from fragmentation and towards the whole, and openness to the prophetic element."

EPS 94.FIN.21

Programme to Combat Racism set by Central Committee

CANTERBURY, England, 28 August 1969--The World Council of Churches through its top governing body agreed August 21 to give $200,000 out of its financial reserves to a special fund to be distributed to organizations of oppressed racial groups or those which support victims of racism.

The Central Committee meeting here also voted to ask WCC member churches to contribute an additional $300,000 to the fund.

A motion to block the use of reserves because "it was no sacrifice to spend money given by others for a different purpose" was defeated. ...

The only limitation placed on the use of these funds was that the organizations approved must have purposes consonant with the general purposes of the World Council and two of its divisions from which the reserves would come.

The proposal to use World Council reserves was part of a "Plan for an Ecumenical Programme to Combat Racism" brought to the Central Committee last week, then sent to a policy reference sub-committee for strengthening. After four hours of intensive debate the Central Committee approved the plan by an overwhelming vote, six members abstaining. ...

"We call upon churches to confess their involvement in the perpetuation of racism", said the report coming out of the policy reference committee. "We urge churches to make land available free or at low cost to racially oppressed groups for community and economic development", it added.

"Churches that have benefited from racially exploitative economic systems should immediately allocate a significant portion of their total resources, without employing paternalistic mechanisms of control, to organizations of the racially oppressed", said an amendment proposed by Father Paul Verghese, principal of a Syrian Orthodox seminary in Kottayam, India. ...

Recalling that both the churches of the United States and the WCC-sponsored Consultation on Racism in London in May had mentioned prominently the issue of reparations, the Central Committee approved a statement that said: "There can be no justice in our world without a transfer of economic resources to undergird the redistribution of political power...In this transfer of resources a corporate act by the ecumenical fellowship of churches can provide a significant moral lead." ...

Assertions by Asian members of the Central Committee that the charge of racism did not apply to them but only to the "white northern world" were made several times in last week's debate. This prompted the policy sub-committee to add the statement that "racism today is not confined to certain countries or continents. It is a world problem. White racism is not its only form". It was pointed out, for instance, that part of the aftermath of colonialism is the struggle for economic and political power between communities and tribes.

EPS 94.FIN.22

World Council receives gift from Pope

GENEVA, 9 March 1972--Pope Paul VI has made a special gift of $10,000 to the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. He expressed the hope that "this gesture might dispel any cloud that may be hanging over our relations with the World Council of Churches and help to further collaboration even in those forms prevailing until now".

Dr Eugene Carson Blake, WCC general secretary, sent a letter of acknowledgement to the Pope in which he expressed deep appreciation for the "generous gift".

The main task of the Faith and Order Commission is to bring the churches together for conversation and study in order that they may manifest more fully their oneness. For some years all major studies of the Commission have been carried out with Roman Catholic participation and the last meeting of the Commission, in August 1971, was held at the Catholic University of Louvain. The Commission has 135 members of whom one-tenth are now Roman Catholic theologians. This broadly-based membership will be of importance for the endeavour started at Louvain to formulate together "the reasons for the hope that is in us".

EPS 94.FIN.23

Church Calls for DDR Reform

BERLIN, 31 October 1989--As one of his first official engagements, Egon Krenz, new leader of the ruling communist party (SED) in the DDR (East Germany), met leaders of BELK, the Federation of Evangelical Churches in the DDR (19 October). And in his first speech to the nation on DDR tv, Krenz told 'all religious citizens' that 'socialist society needs and wants your contribution. More unites us than divides us.' ...

Krenz was elected SED general secretary (18 October) in succession to Erich Honecker, 78.

It is the most serious crisis in the history of the DDR, which recently marked (7 October) the 40th anniversary of its existence. The presence of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev only encouraged protesters calling for Soviet-style reforms in the DDR as well. He indirectly criticised his hosts by saying 'life will punish those who react too late'.

Evangelical churches all over the DDR have been the focus for demonstrations and protest meetings. These have continued, and increased in size, since Krenz was chosen. Unlike those in previous years, the current protests are not limited to independent peace-and-human-rights activists, and they are no longer confined to the relatively safe protection of church buildings.

Nevertheless, churches still provide a focus for protests. Up to 300 000 people demonstrated in Leipzig (23 October), after the weekly 'prayers for peace' in the Evangelical churches there, the largest mass demonstration ever seen in DDR history. Little more than a month before, a similar demonstration attracted only 300 people.

In Berlin, the red-brick Gethsemane church in the working class district of Prenzlauer Berg offered refuge to demonstrators being pursued by police after protests outside the parliament building on 7 October where Gorbachev was warning the SED politburo, then still led by Honecker, not to delay reforms.

EPS 94.FIN.24

Gorbachev on religion: attitude changing

ROME, 1 January 1990--During his recent visit to Rome, which included a meeting with the pope, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev commented on religion: 'We need spiritual values. We need a revolution of the mind. This is the only way towards a new culture and new politics that can meet the challenge of our time. We have changed our attitude towards some matters - such as religion - which, admittedly, we used to treat in a simplistic manner.' He also said that the Soviet leadership proceeds 'from the assumption that no one should interfere in matters of the individual's conscience'. He said 'people of many confessions, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and others, live in the Soviet Union. All of them have a right to satisfy their spiritual needs.'

EPS 94.FIN.25

Church union marks major step forward in dismantling of apartheid

GENEVA, 19 April 1994--A meeting of two Reformed South African churches - a black church and a "so-called coloured" church - in Cape Town on 14 and 15 April to form a new, non-racial church, marks an historic step in the dismantling of apartheid.

There are also hopes that South Africa's white Reformed church will eventually join the new united church.

"I think this is one of the most significant events in recent church history here in South Africa", Russel Botman, chairperson of the Southern Africa Alliance of Reformed Churches, told ***EPS***. Botman is a clergyman and member of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa, which formed the new church with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

"These [two] churches were established as racial churches for the people of these races because the white [Dutch Reformed] church decided in 1857 that because of the weaknesses of some of the people in their church, it was a better way to go about things", Botman said. "Apartheid started with the establishment of these churches. It started first in the church and then in politics." ...

EPS 94.FIN.26

Trekkie translators in Bible battle

NEW YORK, 4 July 1994--Linguists seeking to boldly go where no biblical translator has gone before have fallen out in an enterprise to render the Bible into Klingon, the language of Captain Kirk's former extra-terrestrial enemies in the television and cinema series, *Star Trek*, the London *Guardian* reports.

The Klingon language, with its own vocabulary, grammar and syntax, was created for the movie *Star Trek III: the Search for Spock*, and has since spawned a host of Klingon language products among *Star Trek* aficionados (known as "Trekkies"), including Klingon newsletters, conversational Klingon tapes and Klingon poetry festivals.

The Bible translators, based at the Klingon Language Institute in Philadelphia have split because the Klingon language lacks many words found in the Bible.

Most of the group - the so-called "literalists" - wish to coin new words, such as "grain food" and "water animals" for loaves and fishes. Not so Professor Sten Proechel who has resigned from the group to work on his own translation. Proechel claimed that the project should use notions familiar to Klingons. Proechel's rendering of the sharing of loaves and fishes would be "vagh 'IW chab cha ghargh wIghaj", which for terrestrial readers of *EPS* would mean "We have five blood pies and two serpent worms". **[EPS]**